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ABSTRACT

Although San Diego City Schools is entering its fourth year of restructuring efforts, many schools are still reluctant to assume the autonomy offered to them. If school restructuring is stalling, it is because district offices have not yet restructured, research on what is known about implementing changes has been ignored, and no clear methodology to facilitate the process has emerged. The district may sometimes continue to mandate programs running counter to flexibility. Teachers must feel empowered to be willing to invest in restructuring and accept responsibility because change cannot be legislated but must occur in the classroom. Principles of change include adjusting relevant aspects of the environment and considering formal and informal organization. Stages of concern about change occur from mere awareness of an innovation to refocusing on exploring more universal benefits. A useful instructional system design is linear in nature and simplified as to analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. At the San Diego evaluation department, evaluation has a role in all five stages. In the process of change, teachers' concerns must be considered and time and resource burdens must be borne by the district. (16 references) (EJS)

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# Expanding the Evaluation Department Role in a Restructuring District: A Technical Assistance Model

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The agenda for restructuring our schools grows out of the gap between the educating we expect of schools and what we perceive them to be doing....the agenda will not be the same for everyone. -- John Goodlad

Imagine, if you will, a district where schools receive all funding in one block and are allowed to decide how to spend it; where schools are allowed to hire and fire staff based on peer reviews and site determined measures of accountability; where teachers are free to select curriculum materials they deem appropriate and develop instructional strategies to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms; where staff development is grounded in research-based, theoretical underpinning and meets site specific goals determined through needs assessment; and where the central office role is one of facilitating and communicating rather than regulating and supervising.

The above vision is drawn from recommendations that emerged from a three day conference on restructuring held in San Diego this fall. The recommendations, made to the San Diego City Schools Superintendant's Cabinet by site personnel, imply that somehow the district's central office should enable this to occur, and suggest that most schools are still in a top-down mindset. Although San Diego City Schools is entering its fourth year of its restructuring effort, and is widely regarded as a national leader, many schools in the district are reluctant to assume the autonomy, responsibility, and accountability offered them. This past summer, the Superintendant, Tom Payzant, felt it necessary to say that all schools will restructure within two years and designated twelve schools as "renewal schools" that will have restructuring imposed upon them. This represents a significant departure from the underlying philosophy of restructuring expressed last year by Dr. Payzant (1989):

> "On the basis of what we know about how children learn, it's good sense to give teachers the power to decide how their school is run and the flexibility to choose from a broad repertoire of teaching techniques--and then hold them accountable for the results.
>
> "...restructuring works from the bottom up. It starts where learning is transacted between teachers and students. It acknowledges that the best form for that transaction might be different in different schools and that schools should be able to organize themselves differently. It recognizes that people in every school must decide on a vision of what that school can be, set high expectations, and collaborate on strategies for making sure students learn."

If restructuring is stalling in San Diego (as it is suggested in recent studies elsewhere in the country) it is partly because the district offices have not yet restructured. A greater cause is that the research on what we know about implementing innovation and

change has been largely ignored. Most importantly, no clear methodology has emerged for districts to facilitate the process of gap closing alluded to in the opening quote from John Goodlad. This paper will examine each of these three problem areas, and present a model for central office personnel that explains why restructuring is stalling, and that, when followed, has been successful in facilitating change through sensitivity to the processes of systems design and implementation of innovation.

## Restructuring the District Role

The paradox of restructuring is that reform can neither be legislated or imposed on schools, but for true reform to occur, it must occur in the classroom between teachers and students. Teachers, however, feel disempowered by legislation and district constraints. As Timar (1989) noted "restructuring is complicated by the fact that schools must change not only their own microcultures, but also the macrocultures of district and state policies in which they are embedded (p. 267)". Branson, in an article presenting his "Upper Limits Hypothesis" for schools, asserted that "it is essential that the entire (educational) system go through a fundamental redesign to define mission and *system requirements*, then develop empirically based methodologies to meet those requirements." (Branson, 1987.) (Emphasis added.) Hornbeck (1990), in an address before the National Association of State Boards of Education, suggested that the education system must be entirely revamped for schools to achieve the lofty education goals endorsed by President George Bush and the nation's governors. Achieving the education goals "will require sweeping changes in the way schools are organized, in what students learn and how they learn it, in how results are measured, and in the *roles and responsibilities* of various actors at the state, local, and school levels." (Emphasis added.)

More specific recommendations come from Berman (et al.,1989) to the California Business Roundtable in the Principles for a new educational system:

> Performance-based--Students, teachers, administrators, schools, and districts should be evaluated according to their performance and held accountable for results.
>
> School Autonomy--Principals and teachers should have the authority and support to provide quality education attuned to community needs and characteristics;

and recommendations from the California Education Summit, 1990: "Focus restructuring efforts on *students* with district and schools developing a clear vision of what it takes to improve student performance....Involve teachers in restructuring, providing them time to

focus their skills, knowledge, and expertise on the task of delivering a rich, thinking curriculum successfully to diverse students."

What effort has San Diego (or other restructuring districts) made toward fundamental changes or defining of system requirements, roles, and responsibilities. In an informational pamplet released last month the district says:

> "San Diego City Schools has embarked on an ambitious process of school restructuring. Beginning in 1987 when the Schools of the Future Commission recommended a 'fundamental restructuring of schools', the district has moved steadily toward increased autonomy at school sites with the central office acting as support and resource to the schools.
>
> The goal of restructuring is to improve student outcomes through greater staff/community involvement in the site decision making process. Each school site is supported and encouraged to involve classified, certificated, and administrative staff, as well as parents and community members, in strategic planning based on the needs of students at the school and the core values of the district."

Providing "support, encouragement, and resources" to schools, while having appropriate intent, is too ill-defined to entice schools and teachers to assume unknown responsibilities. Empowerment has not occurred for most teachers and schools because the relationship between central office and school sites is still perceived as top-down, bureaucratic, and disjointed. While granting "permission" to change for some, the district still mandates numerous programs that run counter to flexibility in teaching practices. As Goodlad (1984) noted, "schools will improve slowly, if at all, if reforms are thrust upon them. Rather, the approach having most promise, in my judgement, is one that will seek to cultivate the capacity of schools to deal with their own problems, to become largely self-renewing. Schools will have great difficulty, however, in becoming self-renewing without support from their states and local districts." Without specific barriers removed and support demonstrated, teachers will not feel empowered.

Before empowerment can occur, teachers have to feel engaged. Research by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching national survey shows the effort to empower teachers through school-based management over the past two years has had little effect on school reform: teachers don't feel they have any more say in key decisions affecting their schools and classrooms than they did when surveyed for the foundation's 1988 report. Boyer (1990), the foundation president noted, "I have the uncomfortable feeling that, nationally, the (reform) effort has begun to stall. Momentum has lessened, precisely because the most difficult issues, the most vexing problems, have not been adequately addressed--and most especially, perhaps, because *teachers have been bypassed* in the process."

Timar (1989) earlier had noted the process of "implementing ... restructuring involves two dimensions of policy: programs and practices. Programs define the core tasks and shape the overall mission of an organization; practices, by contrast, define the *character of engagement and the quality of execution* of the program structures....The *willingness* and capacity of schools to reassess their mission and their practices will determine whether or not the various manifestations of restructuring take root as effective reform strategies." (Emphasis added.)

Unless teachers feel empowered and have some sense of autonomy, they will not be willing to assume responsibility nor accept accountability for what occurs in their classrooms. We can not separate these three elements. At each level of the educational system, and for all participants--students, teachers, parents, administrators, central office, and board--individuals must be free and willing to say "I will do this".

Finally, before teachers can invest in restructuring and accept responsibility, provisions must be made by the district to ensure sufficient teacher capital: time. As Carnoy argues (1990), "It is teachers' time and energy that drive the reform, and no matter how organizationally efficient or politically appealing, it is not going to work unless they think it makes sense."

The above discussion suggests a heirarchy of concern: fundamental systemwide change is driven by a redefinition of roles and responsibilities at all levels, which is driven by an engagement and empowerment of teachers, which is driven by a concurent assumption of autonomy and accountability, which is driven by very pragmatic concerns regarding time, resources, and technical support. The district role in the process of restructuring, therefore, is to systematically address the lower level pragmatic concerns. The literature on implementing change and innovation provides guidelines for <u>how</u> to accomplish that, and melded with the instructional systems design literature, a model of <u>what</u> the process is emerges.

## Managing Change

The literature on managing change is guided by Benne & Birnbaum's (1969) Principles of Change :

1. To change a subsystem or any part of a subsystem, relevant aspects of the environment must also be changed.
2. To change behavior on any one level of a hierarchical organization, it is necessary to achieve complementary and reinforcing changes in organization levels above and below that level.

3. The place to begin change is at those points in the system where some stress and strain exist. Stress may give rise to dissatisfaction with the status quo and thus become a motivating factor for change in the system.
4. Both the formal and the informal organization of an institution must be considered in planning any process of change.
5. The effectiveness of a planned change is often directly related to the degree to which *members at all levels of an institutional hierarchy take part in the fact-finding and the diagnosing of needed change and in the formulating and reality-testing of goals and programs of change.* (Emphasis added.)

The last principle is particularly relevant to restructuring. Yet, how well are schools able to conduct "fact-finding and diagnosing" or "formulating and reality-testing"? Work by Gross (et al, 1971) cites a failure to develop an adequate design for implementation as well as "technical problems" in the management of change. Fullan (1982), in his widely cited work, stresses the need to consider the subjective and objective *meaning* of change. Egan (1983) developed a three step model for change:

1. Assess the current scenario
2. Create the prefered scenario
3. Design a plan that moves the system from the current to the preferred.

This rather simplified view needs to consider the subjective more closely. When implementing change in schools, teachers must feel they are capable of implementing the innovation. Marsh and Jordan-Marsh (1985) addressed this "sense of efficacy" teachers may acquire if attention is paid to the Stages of Concern work (Hall & Rutherford, 1979). The Stages of Concern are presented in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Table 1: Stages of Concern

STAGES OF CONCERN ABOUT THE INNOVATION

6 REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.

5 COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.

4 CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and compentencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.

3 MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.

2 PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.

1 INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.

0 AWARENESS: Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

## Instructional Systems Design

Goodlad (1984) stated that "improvement is essentially a school-by-school *process*, enlightened by the degree to which those associated with each school and trying to improve it have the data required for building a useful agenda" (emphasis added). Acquiring data for building an agenda (or as in Egan's first step: Assess the current scenario) is an elaboration of his comment on "gaps". This may have come from earlier work in the field of Instructional Systems Design (Gagne & Briggs, 1979) and later expansion into the larger field of Educational Technology (Dick & Carey, 1985; Rossett, 1987). Both fields model a systematic process of applied technology and problem solving. It is linear in nature and simplified as:

Analysis--->Design--->Development--->Implementation--->Evaluation

Technology, in this sense, is not a "thing" as it is often referred to in the educational literature. Often "infusing technology into schools" is taken as using computers or interactive video. Technology is a problem-solving mindset. Atkin (1990): Views technology as " an enterprise directed toward altering the human condition". Its "purpose is to make our work more efficient, or to provide *new and better methods*....The type of thinking encouraged by technology emphasizes variety and a certain divergence in intellectual effort...practical reasoning."

Educational Technology begins with "needs assessment" in the Analysis stage to determine the "actuals" (Rossett, 1987). It is scientific and systematic in nature. It is at this point that schools and teachers most need "support" from their district technical staff. Most teachers are unprepared and have neither the time nor resources. Once the problems are identified, the Design stage determines the "optimals" (Rossett, 1987). Again, most teachers lack the research base to design programs, and the district curriculum staff can be most useful in this area. By involving teachers in both these stages, the innovation can be viewed at the Management level of concern by the time it is implemented. This process is illustrated in Figure 1 as the "C" line: the Technical Assistance Model.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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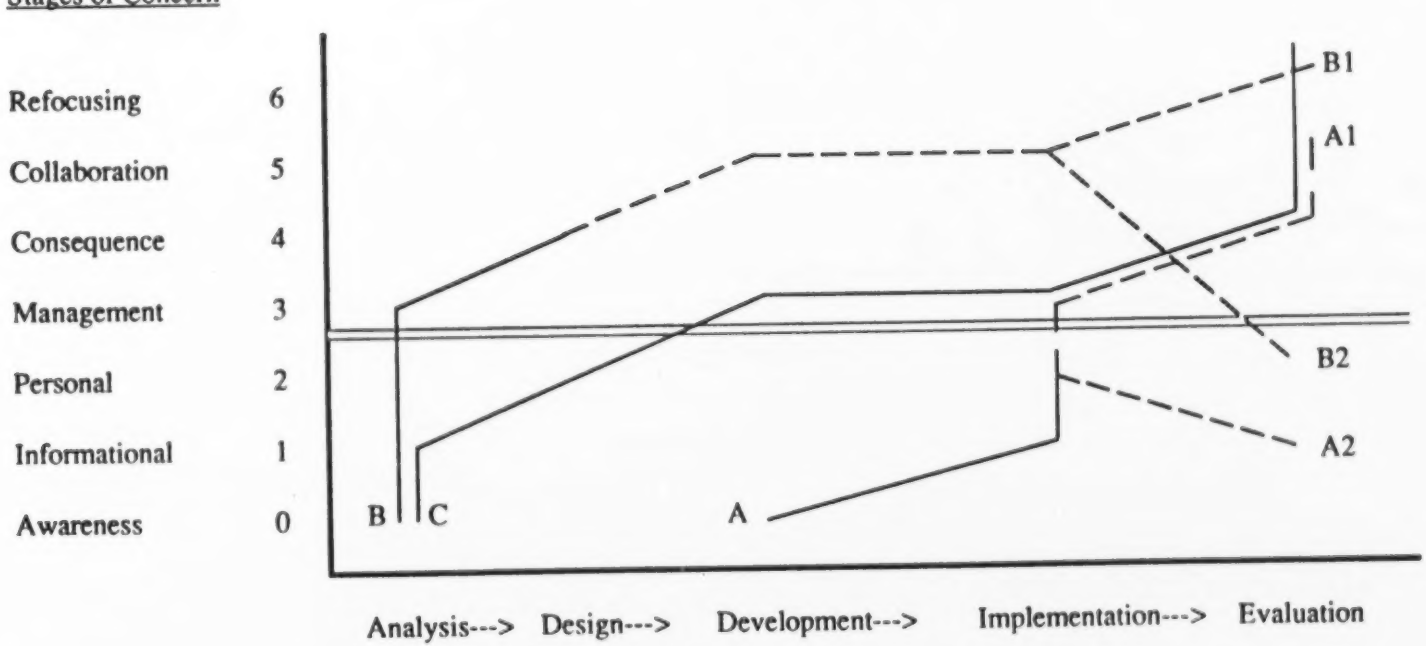
## Change Model




A= Traditional
B= Restructuring
C= Technical Assistance

Figure 1: Synthesis of Technology and Stages of Concern as it relates to restructuring

Line A in Figure 1 (Traditional) shows how teachers traditionally have first become aware of new programs or innovations: when they were being developed. They are informed at implementation "in-services", which often tell them how, but little why. From there, if personal concerns are adequately addressed, they may move into higher management or consequence levels of concern. More likely, as evidenced by the series of "fad" failures in schools, those personal concerns will not be addressed, and the teacher will go back to old methods that make less demands or in which they feel adequately competent.

Line B in Figure 1 (Restructuring) suggests what districts are asking teachers to do: go straight to the management level (bypassing personal concerns) and assume responsibility and accountability before the problems or solutions are even identified. This an seems unrealistic expectation. The dotted lines in Figure 1 represent unknown outcomes for teachers. The double horizontal line between personal and management concerns is an efficacy barrier indentified by Marsh & Jordan-Marsh (1985). Under the restructuring model, the dotted line could fall below the efficacy barrier much earlier than shown.

Line C (Technical Assistance) envisions district staff providing technical (in both the problem solving and skills sense) assistance to teachers through the analysis and design stages, that teachers may feel supported and enable them to take ownership and "buy-in". Personal concerns are addressed at the design stage, that unrealistic expectations aren't formed. Responsibility (and ensuing accountability) is derived from joint identification of the problem, agreed upon resolutions, and expected outcomes.

How does this work for district staff? In San Diego, the Evaluation Department has been following this model for the past two years. Department responsibility, roles at various stages, and committment to schools is diagramed in Figure 2.

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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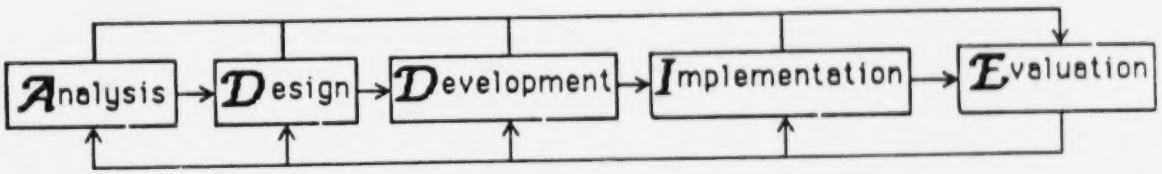
Under this model, the role of evaluation is no longer at the end of a linear process functioning in a summative nature, but rather has a looping, formative role in all five stages of the instructional systems design process.

Figure 2:

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODEL




EVALUATION ROLES:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goal Analysis<br>. Mission Statements | Literature Reviews | Technological Support | Observations | Data Collection Analysis |
| Needs Assesment<br>. Interviews<br>. Surveys | Measurable Objectives | Data Collection Instrument Development | Qualitative Analysis | |
| Extant Data Analysis | | | | |

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

What is the problem?

What is expected?

Who is responsible?

What are reactions?

Did it work?

## Conclusions

This paper has addressed the problems of district role ambiguity under restructuring. Sweeping fundamental changes in the educational system are not proposed here: those will come about in the classrooms as teachers and schools are empowered to select research grounded methodology that work for them. The district offices can play a vital, enabling role by articulating exactly what it is they are able to do to assist schools in the process of change. Care must be taken to consider teachers concerns, and to what ever extent possible, the burden of time and resources must be borne by the district. Each central office department should look to the instructional systems design process and ask, for each stage, what role can this department play to assist at this point. The Evaluation Department's Technical Assistance Model can serve as a guide. Finally, this service oriented outreach to schools must be coordinated by a central "brokerage". The last thing schools need is another disconnected central office program.

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